

What is claimed is:

1. A printing apparatus for printing an image based on image data, comprising:

a priority decision unit operable to decide which to prioritize, a quality of the image at the time of printing or a speed of processing the image data, based on print content description data including information on layout instructions for printing the image;

a print data generation unit operable to generate print data including the image, based on the following: the print content description data, the decision made by the priority decision unit, and the image data; and

a printing unit operable to print the print data generated by the print data generation unit.

2. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,

wherein in a case where a plurality of images are arranged in a sheet, and the print content description data indicates that the plurality of images are arranged in the sheet to be printed, the priority decision unit decides to prioritize the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of each of the plurality of images at the time of printing, and the print data generation unit generates the print data based on said decision made by the priority decision unit.

3. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,

wherein in a case where a plurality of images are arranged in a sheet, the print content description data indicates that: i) the plurality of images are arranged in the sheet to be printed; and ii) each of the plurality of images is printed at the number of pixels smaller than a predetermined number of pixels, the priority decision unit decides that the speed of processing the image data should be prioritized rather than the quality of said each of the plurality of

images at the time of printing, and the print data generation unit generates the print data based on said decision made by the priority decision unit.

5 4. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,
 wherein in a case where: 1) a plurality of images are arranged
 in a sheet; 2) the print content description data indicates that: i) the
 plurality of images are arranged in the sheet to be printed, and ii)
 each of the plurality of images is printed at the number of pixels
10 smaller than a predetermined number of pixels; and 3) the plurality
 of images are different from one another, the priority decision unit
 decides that the speed of processing the image data should be
 prioritized rather than the quality of said each of the plurality of
 images at the time of printing, and the print data generation unit
15 generates the print data based on said decision made by the priority
 decision unit.

5. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,
 wherein in a case where the print content description data
20 indicates that the image is to be printed at the number of pixels
 smaller than the predetermined number of pixels, the priority
 decision unit decides that the speed of processing the image data
 should be prioritized rather than the quality of the image at the time
 of printing, and the print data generation unit generates the print
25 data based on said decision made by the priority decision unit.

6. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,
 wherein when the priority decision unit decides to prioritize
 the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of the
30 image at the time of printing, and both the image data of high
 resolution and the image data of low resolution are generated for
 the image, the print data generation unit generates the print data

based on the image data of low resolution.

7. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,
wherein when the priority decision unit decides to prioritize
5 the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of the
image at the time of printing, the print data generation unit
generates the print data by partly skipping plural steps taken in
processing the image data.

10 8. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,
wherein when the priority decision unit decides to prioritize
the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of the
image at the time of printing, and Joint Photographic Experts Group
format is used as a format of the image data, the print data
15 generation unit generates the print data by decoding only a Direct
Current component of the image data.

9. A method of printing an image based on image data,
comprising:

20 a priority decision step of deciding which to prioritize, a
quality of the image at the time of printing or a speed of processing
the image data, based on print content description data including
information on layout instructions for printing the image;

a print data generation step of generating print data including
25 the image, based on the following: the print content description data,
the decision made in the priority decision step, and the image data;
and

a printing step of printing the print data generated in the print
data generation step.

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10. A program for printing an image based on image data, causing
a computer to execute the following steps:

a priority decision step of deciding which to prioritize, a quality of the image at the time of printing or a speed of processing the image data, based on print content description data including information on layout instructions for printing the image;

5 a print data generation step of generating print data including the image, based on the following: the print content description data, the decision made in the priority decision step, and the image data; and

10 a printing step of printing the print data generated in the print data generation step.